

and as brighter prospects appear to open for us, let us aid, since we seem incapable of originating, such measures as are really conducive to our own and the public good. We shall refer to them *in extenso*, when the proper time for their discussion shall have arrived.

LUNATIC ASYLUM IN WALES.

Some time since we drew attention to an able letter, from the pen of Dr. Hitch, of Gloucester, on the condition of the insane poor in Wales. It gives us deep-felt satisfaction to perceive that the generous appeal of Dr. Hitch has been met in a becoming manner by all classes of persons connected with Wales, and by benevolent individuals in various parts of the country.

A committee has been organised for the purpose of providing an hospital for the insane poor of North Wales. John Ablett, Esq., has given a site, containing twenty acres of land and valued at £2000, for the hospital; and many munificent donations, amounting, in several instances, to £200, have been contributed by the nobility and gentry more or less connected with the welfare of Wales.

Under such auspices, and for a purpose so truly noble, the proposed plan must succeed. It was the conception of one fully acquainted with the miseries which insanity entails on the poor; and we can conceive no higher gratification than that which must fill the benevolent mind of Dr. Hitch on finding that the good seed he has sown promises so ripe and rich a harvest.

FEMALE EUNUCHS IN CENTRAL INDIA.

The following curious example of the manner in which travellers are occasionally mystified, we extract from a recent number of the "Experience." The original of the extract is published at the expense of the Oriental Society, in a work by Dr. Roberts, a gentleman who had been sent on a mission of scientific discovery into Central India by the Minister of Public Instruction in France:—

"Shortly after my arrival (says Dr. Roberts) at the caravansary of Feridabad, three singing girls made their appearance at my quarters. They danced and sang to the sound of a *tchiloumtchi*; the latter had a slight depression in the centre for the purpose of supporting a *pitel*, which a *fakiri mahouli* twirled in his fingers, thus producing a constant but irregular roiling sound.

The masculine voices of the singers, their lofty stature, and strange movements, made me at first apprehend that they were disguised *thugs*;^{*} but after some conversation, and in consideration of a few rupees, they were induced to visit me, at a late hour of the night, in my quarters. They now assured me that I was the first person to whom they had revealed their degraded condition.

On examining the persons of these individuals, I ascertained the following particulars. There was no

trace of mammary gland or nipple; the orifice of the vagina was completely obliterated, and showed no mark whatever of cicatrix; the meatus urinarius was free and prominent; the cellular tissue of the genital organs completely atrophied, and without hair; the feeling of the part, where the orifice of the vagina ought to have existed, gave the sensation of slight cartilaginous projection, underneath the skin; thighs flattened; no sexual desire or trace of menstrual secretion.

The women were tall and muscular, enjoyed excellent health, and were about twenty-five years of age. They told me that there were several females of their caste (*bhaëni*) at Delhi and Agra, but I did not see any of them; besides several medical and military officers of the Company's service, who had lived for many years in India, assured me that they never had any knowledge of the existence of these *hedgeras*.

As to the manner in which the operation had been performed I could not obtain any precise information; but an old Brahmin whom I met at Indore, the capital of Malouah, assured me that the atrophy of the ovaries was produced by pricking them with needles impregnated with the fresh juice of the *bhel-bhoul*."

The poor doctor has been most pitilessly quizzed by all the parties in this affair. To commence with the concert—the brazen "tamtam" y'clept the "*tchiloumtchi*" is nothing more or less than a brass washing basin; "*pitel*" is the Hindustani name of brass. The female eunuchs who figure in the dance are simply the emasculated personages common in Upper India, who invariably assume the female garb, and by long tresses, false mammae, and bustles, seek in every way to imitate the weaker and better sex.

The emasculating process in India is most comprehensive, all protuberances being removed by knife and cautery—*saf-kur'd*, or "made a clean business of," as the phrase runs in Hindostan.

The Indore Brahmin must have relished the joke as well as contributed to heighten its flavor by his story of the needle operation. The fruit of the bel (*ægle marmelos*) is simply mucilaginous and saccharine. Few people, however, can play tricks upon travellers with greater effect than the quiet grave Hindu, to whom a green cockney or a Parisian *badaud* is a regular godsend.

ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, PARIS.

January 30, 1843.

PHYSIOLOGY OF DIGESTION.

M. Payen read a report on a memoir by MM. Sandras and Bouchardat on digestion.

The experiments of the authors of the memoir demonstrated a new and very remarkable fact relative to the action of water, weakly acidulated with hydrochloric acid, on fibrin, albumen, gluten, casein, and the animal tissues. All these substances swell, become transparent, and some of them are dissolved. These effects are produced by a solution of six parts of the acid in 10,000 of water.

The authors, however, have gone too far, when they

* Assassins.

consider hydrochloric acid as the sole agent of solution for azotised alimentary substances. Thus, while the acid merely causes fibrin to swell out to a very great extent, but does not dissolve it, complete solution is obtained by adding a few drops of yeast; and this proves that hydrochloric acid is not the only solvent in gastric juice.

We should also, perhaps, take into account the animal substance called *pepsine*, and which MM. Schwann and Deschamps have found in the stomach.

The experiments of the authors, likewise, render it highly probable that when the neutral azotised substances are dissolved in the stomach they pass directly into the veins; gluten is taken up in the same way. Starch and feculent substances are wholly, or in part, converted into lactic acid and thus absorbed.

Fatty substances evidently resist the action of the stomach and pass on into the intestinal canal. The authors regard fat as containing the chief ingredients necessary for the production of chyle.

Feb. 6, 1843.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS.

The candidates for the place vacant in the section of medicine by the death of M. Double, were MM. Andral, Poiseuille, Cruveilhier, Guerin, and Bourguery. On the first ballot, and of 55 voters, M. Andral obtained 42 votes; M. Guerin, 5; M. Cruveilhier, 4; M. Poiseuille, 4. M. Andral was, therefore, declared member of the Academy; and, we need not add, that the election could not have fallen on one more likely to sustain the reputation of that illustrious body.

ENTOZOA IN THE BLOOD OF A DOG.

MM. Gruby and Delafond forwarded some details relative to an entozoon which they had discovered in the blood of a dog. It was found in every portion of the blood of the animal, but the circumstance seems to be accidental, for the authors have since examined the blood of fifteen dogs without finding any trace of the animalculi.

TREATMENT OF CANCER.

In relation to the mode of action of arsenic on cancerous tumors, &c., M. Manec infers from his experiments that the arsenic acts on the cancerous matter by a kind of poisoning, and on the surrounding tissues merely by exciting in them common inflammation. When the cancer sends prolongations into the deep seated parts, these roots are destroyed by the arsenical paste, while the adjacent tissues were merely the seat of suppurative inflammation.

ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, PARIS.

Feb. 7, 1843.

SPECULUM UTERI.

M. Recamier read a note on a new speculum which he had made after various modifications.

TRANSMISSION OF GLANDERS.

M. Renault transmitted several morbid preparations taken from a glandered horse. The following is the history of this curious case, which seems to show that the blood of a glandered horse is capable of communicating the disease to a sound animal.

A man, laboring under glanders, recently died in one of the hospitals. Some pus, taken from the pus-

tules, was employed in the inoculation of a horse, which took the disease and died in fifteen days. During the course of the disease M. Renault conceived the idea of injecting the blood of this horse into the veins of another one. Some blood was first drawn from the jugular vein; on examining it under the microscope, and with different agents, it was not found to differ in any discoverable manner from healthy blood.

About half a pint of blood taken from the affected animal was now injected into the jugular vein of a horse in perfect health; this was done on the 10th of January, and three days afterwards the horse was attacked by glanders.

As the subject of this experiment, however, had been kept in the same quarter with infected animals, it was thought right to repeat it in a more careful manner. Some blood taken from the last mentioned horse was thrown into the jugular vein of another healthy and vigorous horse, which was kept in a stable with sound animals. Still, in three days the horse was attacked and had to be killed. The morbid specimens taken from the horse proved, in a clear manner, that the animal had labored under glanders.

IMPERFORATE ANUS.

M. Amussat showed several children on whom he had performed the lumbar operation for imperforate anus. Some of these cases we have noticed already. One of the children operated on by M. Amussat is now eight and a half years of age, and healthy.

At the last meeting of the Academy, M. Dumas was elected member in the section of physics, by a very large majority.

SHEFFIELD MEDICAL SOCIETY.

January 26, 1843.

W. OVEREND, Esq., the President, in the Chair.

TUBERCULAR PHTHISIS.

Dr. Favell exhibited the left lung of a young man of color, a native of Jamaica. He was twenty-three years of age, and had been resident in this country for about four years. He was admitted into the Infirmary laboring under phthisis in an advanced stage. The lung was excessively tubercular throughout, and a large cavity occupied nearly the whole of the anterior portion.

NECROPSY OF A GRINDER.

Mr. Porter then related the following case:—

William Batty, aged forty-four, of steady habits, had worked at his trade as a fork grinder from the age of thirteen to thirty-one, when he relinquished it from its prejudicial effect upon his health. For eleven years he worked at the making-up of scissors, when he was much exposed to cold, to which he attributes his present state. (Sept. 9, 1842.) When he gave up fork grinding, now thirteen years ago, he suffered a good deal from a short, dry cough, not attended with much pain, and at first with little expectoration, but spitting of blood soon came on; subsequently the expectoration became very copious, occasionally of a black color.

When first seen by Mr. Porter he was extremely attenuated; cough very troublesome, particularly at night; expectoration very copious, generally of a black color, sometimes yellow, and he experienced great